

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Please cancel claims 4, 12, 13, 15, 22, 25, 36, and 37, amend claims 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14, 19, 23, 24, 27, 29, 33, and 35, and add new claims 59-75 as follows:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A siding installation apparatus for engaging a first siding piece and supporting a second siding piece, the first siding piece having a bottom portion and a back surface, the apparatus comprising:

a support member having a longitudinal axis and a support surface to support the second siding piece;

an engagement member projecting from the support member and configured to engage the bottom portion of the first siding piece by contacting at least the back surface of the first siding piece; and

a securing assembly coupled to the support member to releasably restrict the support member from moving relative to the first siding piece, the securing assembly being operable to apply a force to the first siding piece engaged by the engagement member in a direction generally transverse to the longitudinal axis of the support member;

wherein the securing assembly comprises a cam pivotably coupled to the support member and a contact element at least proximate to the cam; and

wherein the cam is selectively pivotable in a first direction to force the contact element against a front surface of the first siding piece to restrict movement of the support member relative to the first siding piece.

2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the support member includes a first portion and a second portion coupled to the first portion, the first portion having an adjustment axis and the second portion being selectively movable relative to the first portion along the adjustment axis.

3. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the support member has an adjustment axis, and wherein the engagement member includes a first portion configured to contact a bottom surface of the first siding piece and a second portion configured to contact the back surface of the first siding piece, the second portion having a longitudinal axis generally transverse to the adjustment axis.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) A siding installation apparatus for engaging a first siding piece and supporting a second siding piece, the first siding piece having a bottom portion and a back surface, the apparatus comprising:

a support member having a support surface to support the second siding piece;

an engagement member projecting from the support member and configured to engage the bottom portion of the first siding piece by contacting at least the back surface of the first siding piece; and

a securing assembly coupled to the support member to releasably restrict the support member from moving relative to the first siding piece:

wherein the securing assembly comprises a cam pivotably coupled to the support member and a contact element at least proximate to the cam, the contact element having a first surface with a first coefficient of friction and a second surface with a second coefficient of friction different than the first coefficient of friction; and

wherein the cam is selectively pivotable in a first direction to force the contact element against a front surface of the first siding piece to restrict movement of the support member relative to the first siding piece.

6. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the securing assembly is configured to selectively engage a the front surface of the first siding piece.

7. (Currently Amended) A siding installation apparatus for engaging a first siding piece and supporting a second siding piece, the first siding piece having a bottom portion and a back surface, the apparatus comprising:

a support member having an aperture and a support surface to support the second siding piece;

an engagement member projecting from the support member and configured to engage the bottom portion of the first siding piece by contacting at least the back surface of the first siding piece; and

a securing assembly coupled to the support member to releasably restrict the support member from moving relative to the first siding piece,

wherein the securing assembly comprises a contact element configured to contact a front surface of the first siding piece and a driving member configured to urge the contact element through the aperture and toward the first siding piece.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the support member is configured to support the second siding piece so that a bottom surface of the second siding piece is spaced apart from a bottom surface of the first siding piece by a desired distance.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the engagement member is attached to the support member.

10. (Currently Amended) A siding installation apparatus for engaging a first siding piece and supporting a second siding piece, the first siding piece having a bottom portion and a back surface, the apparatus comprising:

a support member having a first portion and a second portion coupled to the first portion, the first portion having an adjustment axis and the second portion being selectively movable relative to the first portion along the adjustment axis, the second portion having a support surface to support the second siding piece;

an engagement member projecting from the first portion of the support member, the engagement member configured to engage the bottom portion of the first siding piece by contacting at least the back surface of the first siding piece; and

a securing assembly coupled to the first portion of the support member to releasably restrict the first portion of the support member from moving relative to the first siding piece;

wherein the securing assembly comprises a cam pivotably coupled to the first portion of the support member and a gripper at least proximate to the cam; and

wherein the cam is selectively pivotable in a first direction to force the contact element against a front surface of the first siding piece to restrict movement of the first portion of the support member relative to the first siding piece.

11. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the engagement member includes a first portion configured to contact a bottom surface of the first siding piece and a second portion configured to contact the back surface of the first siding piece, the second portion having a longitudinal axis generally transverse to the adjustment axis.

12-13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the securing assembly is configured to selectively engage a the front surface of the first siding piece.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the support member is configured to support the second siding piece so that a bottom surface of the second siding piece is spaced apart from a bottom surface of the first siding piece by a desired distance.

17. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 10, further comprising a locking device to restrict movement between the first and second portions of the support member.

18. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 10, further comprising a locking device to lock the second portion of the support member in one of a plurality of discrete positions relative to the first portion of the support member.

19. (Currently Amended) A siding installation apparatus for engaging a first siding piece and supporting a second siding piece, the first siding piece having a bottom surface and a back surface, the apparatus comprising:

a support member having an adjustment axis and a support surface to support the second siding piece;

an engagement member coupled to the support member, the engagement member having a first portion configured to contact the bottom surface of the first siding piece and a second portion configured to contact the back surface of the first siding piece, the second portion having a longitudinal axis generally transverse to the adjustment axis; and

a securing assembly coupled to the support member to releasably restrict the support member from moving relative to the first siding piece, the securing assembly being operable to apply a force to the first siding piece engaged by the engagement member in a direction generally transverse to the adjustment axis of the support member;

wherein the securing assembly comprises a cam pivotably coupled to the support member and a contact element at least proximate to the cam; and

wherein the cam is selectively pivotable in a first direction to force the contact element against a front surface of the first siding piece to restrict movement of the support member relative to the first siding piece.

20. (Original) The apparatus of claim 19 wherein the second portion of the engagement member has a first end coupled to the first portion of the engagement member and a second end opposite the first end, wherein the distance between the first end and the support member is greater than the distance between the second end and the support member.

21. (Original) The apparatus of claim 19 wherein the support member includes a first portion having the adjustment axis and a second portion coupled to the first portion, the second portion being selectively movable relative to the first portion along the adjustment axis.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Currently Amended) A siding installation apparatus for engaging a first siding piece and supporting a second siding piece, the first, siding piece having a bottom surface and a back surface, the apparatus comprising:

a support member having an adjustment axis and a support surface to support the second siding piece;

an engagement member coupled to the support member, the engagement member having a first portion configured to contact the bottom surface of the first siding piece and a second portion configured to contact the back surface of the first siding piece, the second portion having a longitudinal axis generally transverse to the adjustment axis; and,

a securing assembly coupled to the support member to releasably restrict the support member from moving relative to the first siding piece:

wherein the securing assembly comprises a cam pivotably coupled to the support member and a contact element at least proximate to the cam, the contact element having a first surface with a first coefficient of friction and a second surface with a second coefficient of friction different than the first coefficient of friction; and

wherein the cam is selectively pivotable in a first direction to force the contact element against a front surface of the first siding piece to restrict movement of the support member relative to the first siding piece.

24. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 19 wherein the securing assembly is configured to selectively engage a the front surface of the first siding piece.

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Original) The apparatus of claim 19 wherein the support member is configured to support the second siding piece so that a bottom surface of the second siding piece is spaced apart from a bottom surface of the first siding piece by a desired distance.

27. (Currently Amended) A siding installation apparatus for engaging a first siding piece and supporting a second siding piece, the first siding piece having a bottom portion and a front surface, the apparatus comprising:

a support member having a longitudinal axis and a support surface to support the second siding piece;

an engagement member projecting from the support member and configured to engage the bottom portion of the first siding piece; and

a securing assembly including a cam pivotably coupled to the support member and a contact element at least proximate to the cam, wherein the cam is selectively pivotable in a first direction to force the contact element against the front surface of the first siding piece engaged by the engagement member to apply a force to the front surface in a direction generally transverse to the longitudinal axis of the support member in order to restrict movement of the support member relative to the first siding piece.

28. (Original) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the support member includes a first portion and a second portion coupled to the first portion, the first portion having an adjustment axis and the second portion being selectively movable relative to the first portion along the adjustment axis.

29. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the support member has an adjustment axis, and wherein the engagement member includes a first portion configured to contact a bottom surface of the first siding piece and a second portion configured to contact a back surface of the first siding piece, the second portion having a longitudinal axis generally transverse to the adjustment axis.

30. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the contact element comprises a rubber portion configured to contact the front surface of the first siding piece and a nylon portion configured to contact the cam.

31. (Original) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the contact element has a first surface with a first coefficient of friction and a second surface with a second coefficient of friction different than the first coefficient of friction.

32. (Original) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the support member is configured to support the second siding piece so that a bottom surface of the second siding piece is spaced apart from a bottom surface of the first siding piece by a desired distance.

33. (Currently Amended) A siding installation apparatus, comprising:
an engagement member configured to be positioned at least proximate to a bottom surface of a first siding piece;

a support member coupled to the engagement member and configured to support a second siding piece so that a bottom surface of the second siding piece is spaced apart from the bottom surface of the first siding piece by a desired distance, wherein the engagement member and the support member do not contact a top surface of the first siding piece; and

a means for selectively restricting movement between the support member and the first siding piece;

wherein the means for selectively restricting movement includes a cam pivotably coupled to the support member and a contact element at least proximate to the cam; and

wherein the cam is selectively pivotable in a first direction to force the contact element against a front surface of the first siding piece to restrict movement of the support member relative to the first siding piece.

34. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 33 wherein the support member includes a first portion and a second portion coupled to the first portion, the first

portion having an adjustment axis and the second portion being selectively movable relative to the first portion along the adjustment axis.

35. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 33 wherein the support member has an adjustment axis, and wherein the engagement member includes a first portion configured to contact the bottom surface of the first siding piece and a second portion configured to contact a back surface of the first siding piece, the second portion having a longitudinal axis generally transverse to the adjustment axis.

36-58. (Cancelled)

59. (New) A siding installation apparatus for engaging a first siding piece and supporting a second siding piece, the first siding piece having a bottom portion and a back surface, the apparatus comprising:

a support member having a first portion and a second portion coupled to the first portion, the first portion having an adjustment axis and the second portion being selectively movable relative to the first portion along the adjustment axis, the second portion having a support surface to support the second siding piece;

an engagement member projecting from the first portion of the support member, the engagement member configured to engage the bottom portion of the first siding piece by contacting at least the back surface of the first siding piece;

a securing assembly coupled to the first portion of the support member to releasably restrict the first portion of the support member from moving relative to the first siding piece;

wherein the securing assembly comprises a cam pivotably coupled to the first portion of the support member and a contact element at least proximate to the cam, the contact element having a first surface with a first coefficient of friction and a second surface with a second coefficient of friction different than the first coefficient of friction; and

wherein the cam is selectively pivotable in a first direction to force the contact element against a front surface of the first siding piece to restrict movement of the first portion of the support member relative to the first siding piece.

60. (New) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein:

the support member comprises an aperture and the contact member covers the aperture; and

the cam is operable to force a portion of the contact member through the aperture and against the front surface of the first siding piece when pivoted in the first direction.

61. (New) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the cam is configured as an eccentric cam.

62. (New) The apparatus of claim 5 wherein:

the support member comprises an aperture and the contact member covers the aperture; and

the cam is operable to force a portion of the contact member through the aperture and against the front surface of the first siding piece when pivoted in the first direction.

63. (New) The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the cam is configured as an eccentric cam.

64. (New) The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the first surface of the contact element is adjacent to the cam and the first coefficient of friction of the first surface is less than the second coefficient of friction of the second surface.

65. (New) The apparatus of claim 10 wherein:

the support member comprises an aperture and the contact member covers the aperture; and

the cam is operable to force a portion of the contact member through the aperture and against the front surface of the first siding piece when pivoted in the first direction.

66. (New) The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the cam is configured as an eccentric cam.

67. (New) The apparatus of claim 19 wherein:

the support member comprises an aperture and the contact member covers the aperture; and

the cam is operable to force a portion of the contact member through the aperture and against the front surface of the first siding piece when pivoted in the first direction.

68. (New) The apparatus of claim 19 wherein the cam is configured as an eccentric cam.

69. (New) The apparatus of claim 23 wherein:

the support member comprises an aperture and the contact member covers the aperture; and

the cam is operable to force a portion of the contact member through the aperture and against the front surface of the first siding piece when pivoted in the first direction.

70. (New) The apparatus of claim 23 wherein the cam is configured as an eccentric cam.

71. (New) The apparatus of claim 23 wherein the first surface of the contact element is adjacent to the cam and the first coefficient of friction of the first surface is less than the second coefficient of friction of the second surface.

72. (New) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein:

the support member comprises an aperture and the contact member covers the aperture; and

the cam is operable to force a portion of the contact member through the aperture and against the front surface of the first siding piece when pivoted in the first direction.

73. (New) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the cam is configured as an eccentric cam.

74. (New) The apparatus of claim 7 wherein the driving member comprises a spring.

75. (New) The apparatus of claim 7 wherein the driving member comprises a screw mechanism.